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SUBSISTENCE ACTIVITIES

262 **Food.**—The chief foods of the *Tehuelche* were guanaco and ostrich meat, the latter being generally preferred as less lean. Armadillos, skunks, tuco tucos (*Ctenomys* sp.), and huemuls were also eaten (Roncagli, 1884, p. 771; Ibar Sierra, 1879, p. 54), but dogs were not (FitzRoy, 1839, 2:150). Grease, fat, and marrow were delicacies, as were also ostrich eggs. The later *Tehuelche*, ordinarily at least, avoided fish (Coan, 1880, p. 60; D'Orbigny, 1835–47, 2:100; 4:101; Bourne, 1853, p. 147; Musters, 1871, p. 201; Ibar Sierra, 1879, pp. 54–55; Borgatello, 1924, p. 16), not, apparently, from magico-religious motives; but near the coast the early *Tehuelche* consumed fish and mollusks (Oviedo, 1851–55, 2:40, 43, 45), the later *Tehuelche* some shellfish (Gervaise, *in* Dumont d'Urville, 1842, 1:278).

While meat was the basic diet, considerable quantities and varieties of plant food were eaten. By the early *Tehuelche* certain roots, "resembling parsnips," were eaten raw or cooked, and made into flour (Pigafetta, 1906, 1:50, 60, 78; Oviedo, 1851–55, 2:40, 43, 45); by the later *Tehuelche*, roots, roasted and made into flour; "wild potatoes," dug up from underground and eaten raw or cooked; seeds, "like mustard," ground between two stones; "a kind of spinach" and a few other plants; "wild dandelions"; barberries, wild currants, strawberries, piñons (*Araucaria* sp.), apples (Juan de la Piedra [1779], 1837, 5:77; Coan, 1880, p. 119; Dumont d'Urville, 1842, 1:154–155, 279; Schmid, 1912, p. 24, with native names of six or seven roots and plants eaten; Musters, 1872, p. 199; Spegazzini, 1884, p. 238; Vignati, 1936, p. 598: cf. Spegazzini, 1884, p. 238; Outes, 1905, p. 253; and especially Vignati, 1936, p. 598, and 1941, for botanical identifications). The later *Tehuelche* chewed the gum which exuded from the incense bush (Musters, 1872, p. 199; Schmid, 1912, p. 28; Spears, 1895, p. 159: cf. details of method of chewing in Hudson, 1926, pp. 125–126), as a pastime and dental cleanser. According to Vignati (1936, p. 602), some of them chewed the leaves of *Chuquiraga avellanedae* "como excitante nervioso."

The *Tehuelche* practiced no agriculture at all, and the early *Tehuelche* had no domesticated animals except the dog. They seem to have had at least two kinds of native dog, a larger long-haired one and a smaller one somewhat resembling the Scotch terrier (Cabrera, A., 1934, pp. 88–91; Spegazzini, 1884, pp. 232–233; Allen, 1920, pp. 476–478); a third kind, resembling the greyhound, was probably a cross between the Spanish galgo and the first of the above two (Cabrera, A., 1934, pp. 88–91). The smaller dogs were used mostly as pets, the larger ones in hunting.

Horses.—The horse was introduced after 1670, and before 1741, probably some time around 1725, from the Argentine *Araucanians*,

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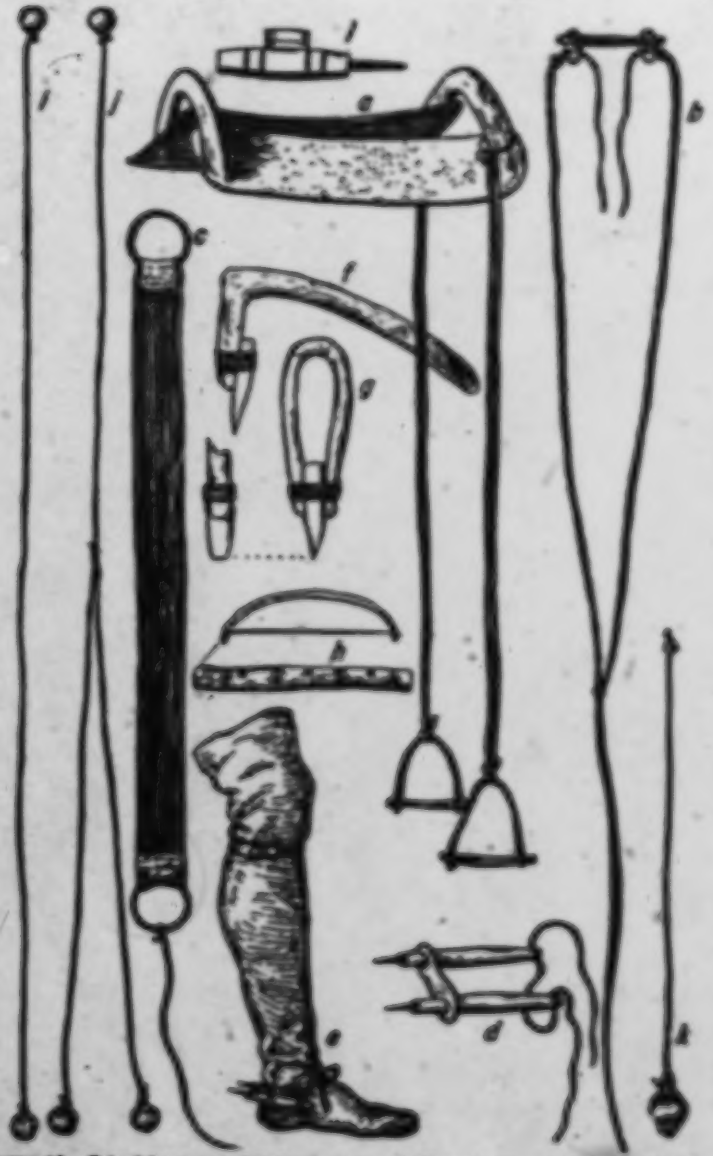

FIGURE 16.—Tehuelche arms and instruments. a, Saddle and stirrup; b, bridle; c, girth; d, spurs; e, boots with spurs; f, ax; g, scraper; h, meshed bag; i, metate; j, pounder; k, bola pendant; l, pipe. (After Moreno, 1877, opposite p. 186.)

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hockey (no doubt, *Arenaceum*). The *Tehuelche* did a great deal of recreational swimming and diving, at which they were very proficient. They, even the women, were greatly addicted to gambling at horseracing, dice, and cards.

Music and musical instruments.—Songs were without words. The early *Tehuelche* used a bark rattle hung to the girdle when dancing (Fletcher, 1854, p. 30); the later people used a rattle of dried bladder or hide, a skin-covered drum, the musical bow (fig. 19, *h*), and (Musters, 1871, p. 77) a flute of guanaco thighbone (probably the long bone used with the musical bow). The bull-roarer and trumpet were absent. (For details on *Tehuelche* musical bow and songs, see Lehmann-Nitsche, 1909 *a*, and Fischer, 1908.)

Tobacco and alcoholic beverages.—Gambling, smoking, and alcoholic beverages were absent from early *Tehuelche* culture, before the 19th century, but later were passionately indulged in (fig. 19, *l*). A favorite procedure among smokers was to lie prone on the ground and to swallow the smoke in order to produce temporary intoxication. (Carteret, 1770, p. 28; Coan, 1880, p. 216; details in Bourne, 1898, pp. 94-95.) Many *Tehuelche* in Musters' time did not smoke or drink at all (Musters, 1872, p. 199); some did not smoke in Prichard's time (1902, p. 101). Tobacco was commonly mixed with calafate (*Berberis* sp.) wood shavings for smoking (Prichard, 1902, p. 109).

Recent *Tehuelche* held an eating and drinking feast, called malón, with dancing, during which they sang and struck their mouths rhythmically with the palms of their hands to break the song, and often with bloody fighting before the feast closed (Borgatello, 1904, pp. 30-32).

RELIGION

Our information on *Tehuelche* religion is extremely meager, superficial, and vague. Great confusion, not to say contradiction, reigns, as a result partly of cultural mixture in the Patagonian and especially Pampean region, partly of failure on the part of some otherwise excellent first-hand observers to distinguish exactly between tribe and tribe.

From out of the welter there seems to emerge pretty clearly the conclusion that the *Tehuelche* believed in a Supreme Being, looked upon as in general benevolent and good, but rather aloof and otiose. (See esp. Viedma, 1837 *b*, pp. 75, 79; Musters, 1871, p. 179; 1873, p. 322; Borgatello, 1904, p. 32.) Whether he was the Maker or moral law-giver is not clear, nor have we evidence of any cult, at least in the way of public rites. The more commonly occurring names by which he was known, although some of them may not be *Tehuelche*, are: Guayava-cumne (*Tehuelche*, Falkner, 1774, p. 114, "lord of the dead"); Soyahn (*Tehuelche* and *Diuihet*, ibid.; *Pataguo*, Dobrizhoffer,

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two leagues below the river divided into two branches, which [33
reunited beyond an island of some extent. Looking up river
in a north-westerly direction, the valley soon narrowed in,
the southern barranca sloping down to within a couple of
miles of our camp; and the view was closed by two remark-
able hills resembling fortresses, which seemed to stand on
guard on either side. I made a slight sketch of the outlines of
the view, which forms the background of the hunting scene.*
Having strolled back to the toldo, I was greeted by the [276]
women with the usual demand, 'Mun anwee'—Anglice,
'Lend us the pipe,' which was duly charged and handed
round. We then sat and watched the proceedings of Kenken, §37
Tankelow's pretty little daughter, just budding into woman-
hood, and a small boy to whom I gave the name of Captain
John, who were amusing themselves by catching and riding
some of the horses which were tamer than the others. The
urchins soon grew tired of their equestrian feats; and,
prompted by the spirit of mischief, which seems ever to
haunt children, and especially Indian boys, came and begged
a match of me. Not suspecting their purpose, I gave them
the coveted prize, with which they hurried off in high delight,
and in a very few minutes had set fire to the rank, withered
herbage, some distance off the toldo, but to the windward.
The conflagration was at first unnoticed by us; but at dusk,
when Tankelow returned from hunting, with a supply of
meat, it was palpably dangerous. So all hands had to set
to work, and by dint of tearing up the grass, with great
trouble we stopped its progress, which if aided by a breeze
in the night would very probably otherwise have consumed
the toldo and endangered the inmates. Of the culprits no
notice was taken, the occurrence being apparently regarded
as all in the day's work. After our supper off guanaco
meat, and a smoke, I turned in, and slept soundly on my [313]
Tehuelche bed of hides and bolsters which had been carefully
arranged by the tall hostess.

* Frontispiece.

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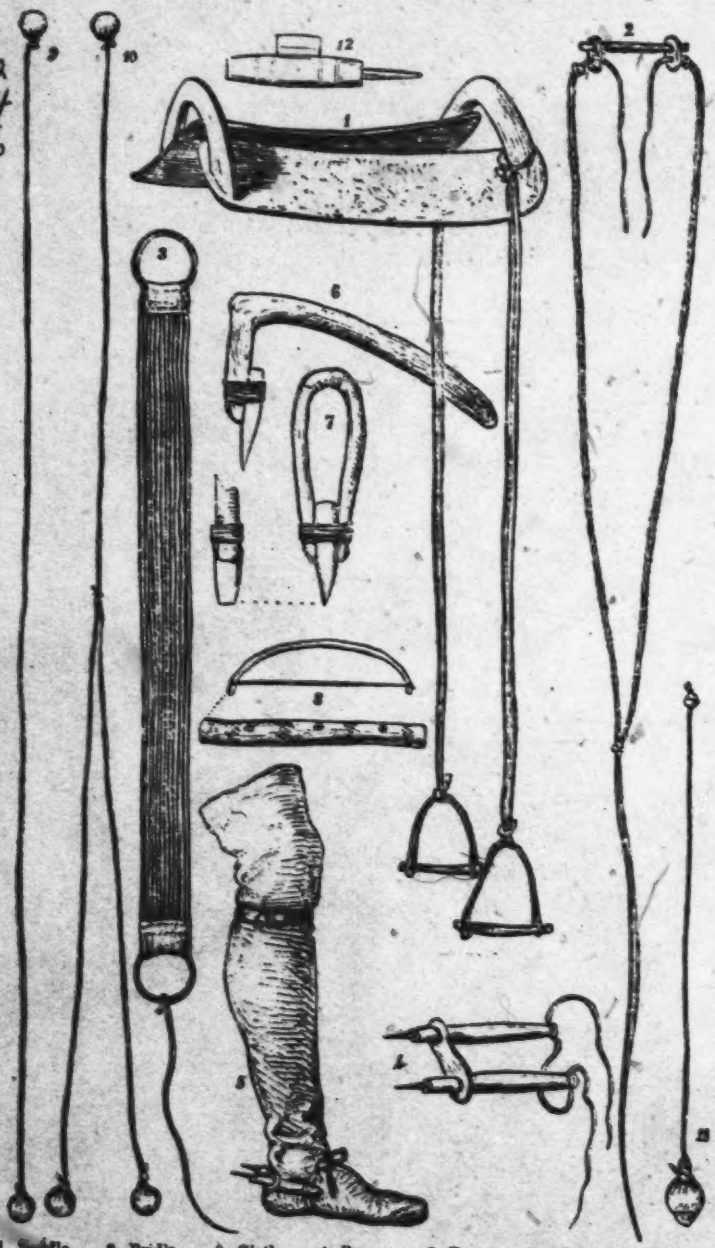

1. Saddle. 2. Bridle. 3. Girth. 4. Spurs. 5. Boot. 6. Adze. 7. Scraper
8. Musical instrument. 9. Ostrich bola. 10. Guanaco bola. 11. Bola perdida. 12. Pipe.

12

[facing p 176]

[No pg 177]

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point fixed in the ends, for which I once tried to substitute bone spikes, but they required constant sharpening and broke quickly. The spurs are secured to the feet by thongs. Headstalls for breaking horses are made either of plain or plaited hide, with a ring underneath for the Maneador.

Lazos are made either of twisted or plaited hide, similar to those in use among the Gauchos. The only other articles of horse-gear worthy of mention are the 'manèos,' called by the Indians 'caligi,' or straps for securing the horse's legs, in order to teach him to stand when the rider has dismounted; but the horses soon learn to await the return of the rider. Since my return a hunting friend, hearing the chase described, eagerly inquired, 'But who held your horse?' The well-trained Tehuelche hunters hold themselves, and no boy or man is available to render this service to any one unlucky enough to be mounted on an uneducated steed. Our breakers might take a useful lesson from the 'savages.'

Another branch of general industry is the manufacture of pipe-bowls, which are peculiar in shape, as may be seen in the plate (fig. 12). They are made of either wood or stone, fitted with a silver or metal tube, and frequently ornamented with silver. The greatest pains is taken to keep them free from tobacco juice by constant cleaning with an ostrich feather.

Wooden platters are sometimes made, for containing meat or grease; and I have seen wooden or horn spoons constructed, but these articles are rare. Casimiro's toldo rejoiced in one of the latter, and it rather resembled a shoehorn. The men are many of them skilful workers in silver, made from dollars obtained in the settlements, and tempered until they become sufficiently malleable to be beaten out into the requisite shapes, either for buckles, garters, plates, beads, or studs for embossing belts or armour with. These 'cups,' or studs, are generally hollowed out in a suitable cavity, worked in a stone; they are then pierced at the edges

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He was a great smoker; and when-
ever I met him invariably said the few English words I had 276
taught him, 'Load and light the pipe—smoke.' The general manner of smoking is as follows. The smoker lights his pipe, and then lies prone on the ground, and after puffing a portion of smoke to each cardinal point and muttering a prayer, he swallows several mouthfuls of tobacco smoke, which produces intoxication and partial insensibility, lasting perhaps for the space of two minutes. During this time his companions carefully avoid disturbing him in any way. When it has passed off, he gets up, takes a drink of water, and resumes his conversation or occupation. I have sometimes observed this intoxication accompanied by convulsions, but only in rare cases. The tobacco used for smoking (for they never chew) is generally obtained from the settlements, but failing this a herb substitute is procured from the Araucanians. This is never smoked pure, being invariably mixed with either wood chopped up small or 'yerba' (Paraguay tea) stalks, if obtainable. The mixture with dung mentioned by M. Guinnard is unknown among the Tehuelches.

The women sometimes are smokers, but the custom is not universal, being generally confined to the old ladies. Most of the men smoke, but there are exceptions. I was very much astonished, however, by seeing El Sourdo on more than one occasion give his pipe to his boy—a precocious three-year-old—who whiffed his 'bacca' with apparently great satisfaction to himself and his fond father.

The chief amusements amongst the Indians (for hunting 525
is a matter of business and not pleasure) consist in horse-racing, card-playing, gambling with dice, made by themselves with mathematical exactness from bones, and thrown from the hand, or with small stones, and playing a game of ball. The horse-racing has been already described. The cards used are sometimes the Spanish pack, obtained in the settlements, but very frequently constructed by the Indians themselves of hide. These, like the ordinary Spanish cards, are marked with the Spanish numerals up to seven; but the

3: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1872
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horse they can catch; whilst the girls play at making miniature toldos, and sitting in them.

The Indians evince great affection for their children, indulging them in every way, and never chastising them for freaks or acts of mischief. They are inveterate gamblers, manufacturing their own cards out of hide, and will sometimes remain two or three days without food, as it is unlucky to eat whilst playing, absorbed in games of chance, on which they stake all their possessions. The men, also, when opportunity offers, race their horses, winning and losing heavy stakes on the result; but I am bound to say that foul play is unknown, and all debts of honour are scrupulously paid on the spot. They also play a game with stones resembling the "knucklebones" of English school-boys, and a game of ball, played by eight players, four on each side, within a ring marked by a lazo laid on the ground: two balls are used, made of hide stuffed with feathers; the player throws the ball up from under the thigh, and strikes it with his hand at the adversary, each hit counting a point.

They are dependent for food almost entirely on the chase; the statements that they eat raw meat have probably arisen from their custom of sometimes eating the heart, marrow, liver, blood, and kidneys, raw. The meat is invariably cooked, that of the ostrich being preferred. The most usual method of cooking on the hunting ground is to prepare the bird so as to form a bag, enclosing the meat with hot stones, which is placed on the embers, the broth being thus retained. In camps, they also roast the meat on spits, or sometimes boil it. The iron pots are, however, more generally used for frying out the grease or marrow. Their occasional vegetable diet consists of the roots of a species of wild potato, found, however, only in a few localities, a description of spinach, and a few other plants, when procurable. They also eat the leaves of the dandelion, which is frequently met with in the grassy valleys; and wild currants, strawberries, apples, and piñones, when in the parts where they abound. In fact, they readily eat any fruit or vegetable products obtainable; and are great consumers of salt, obtained in sufficient quantity from various salinas. They occasionally chew a species of gum which exudes from the incensebush; this, however, is intended as a dentrifice. Intercourse with settlements has taught the Tehuelches the uses of tobacco, sugar, zerba, and rum; none of which, however, are looked upon as indispensable, with the exception of tobacco, which is always prepared for smoking by a mixture of chips of wood: many of them, however, neither smoke nor drink.

On the birth of a child, if the parents are rich, i.e., own plenty of mares, horses, and silver ornaments, notice is immediately

3: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1872
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chu", is supposed continually to lurk outside and at the back of the toldo, watching for an opportunity to do harm to the inhabitants, and is only prevented from causing continual annoyance by the spells of the doctors, which latter are not only supposed to be gifted with the power of laying the devil, but also affirm that they can see him. On an occasion of sickness it is a common custom with these and other Indians to try and drive away the evil spirit by firing off guns and revolvers, throwing lighted brands into the air, and beating the backs of the toldos with lance shafts or bolas. Besides this particular household devil, if I may be allowed the expression, there are many others who live in caverns under particular rocks and rivers; they are supposed to be the spirits of departed members of the medical profession. Their power was, as far as I could ascertain, confined to the districts contiguous to their habitations.

These Indians have also a custom of saluting the new moon, patting their heads and murmuring an incantation. They also salute in the same manner the spirits of the rocks and rivers. I at first was of opinion that they merely saluted these objects as specimens of the Creator's handiwork, but at last was inclined to think that their devotions were directed to propitiate the tutelary demons presiding over them. They have many signs and omens; one peculiar one is the cry of the night-jar, which, if uttered over a camp or toldo, betokens sickness to some of the inmates. They also object strongly to this bird being injured in any way. Another animal looked upon as having powers of witchcraft is a flat, toad-like lizard, common on the slopes of the Cordillera. Its power is confined chiefly to laming horses, and it is killed whenever met with. When about to smoke, the Indians invariably puff a portion to each cardinal point, muttering an incantation; they then lie prone on the ground, and inhale several puffs, which produces a state of torpor or insensibility, lasting perhaps one or two minutes, when they take a drink of water and recover their senses. Sometimes the intoxication is accompanied with convulsions. This intoxication is not confined to the Indians, I myself having frequently, after inhaling tobacco smoke, experienced the same results.

The position of wizard or doctor is not a very desirable one, as in the event of his prognosticating a success in a war expedition, or cessation in sickness, or any other event which is not realised, the chief will not unfrequently have him killed. Wizards are chosen *not* by hereditary descent, but by peculiarities exhibited in their youth. Women are allowed to become doctors, but such are rare. Witchcraft, however, is not confined to these wizards, and sometimes a dying man will state that so and so has caused his death by magic, in which case the person accused,

5: Bourne T-5 (1849)1874
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last argument was decisive, and she kept her huge mouth closed for the night. There was a silent pause for some minutes, and, without another word, we ranged ourselves for repose. I thought the old heathen's conscience troubled him through the night; his sleep was broken, and he appeared very restless. Early the next morning he went to the lodge of the newly-married pair, and had a long chat with them. They thought him rather severe upon them at first; but, after a good deal of diplomacy, a better understanding was brought about. The young people could hardly get over a sense of the indignities they had received; but in the course of the day they returned, bag and baggage, to the old chief's tent, and made it their permanent abode.

We now moved in a westerly direction, and on the way succeeded in capturing a good deal of game. Their mode of dealing with the carcass of the guanaco is enough to dissipate whatever appetizing qualities the meat — in itself very palatable — would otherwise possess. It was no uncommon circumstance, while the squaws were removing the hide, to see the dogs tugging at the other extremity, the women, meantime, crying out "Eh! Ah!" in a dissuasive, though not angry, tone. If the animals become too audacious, the ire of their mistresses is kindled, and they break out with "Cashuran cashahy!" a phrase equivalent to that which, in English, directs its object to a region unmentionable in ears polite.

The Indians have, strictly speaking, no profane expressions. I never could learn that they worshipped or had any idea of a Supreme Being. The only observance which bore any aspect of religion was associated with something we

5: Bourne T-5 (1849)1874
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should little think of as an object of adoration — the tobacco-pipe; — though, how far this is, in fact, an object of idolatry in Christian lands, it might not become me to speculate. The only occasions on which the Indians discovered any appearance of devotion were those of smoking. This may have been only a symptom of intoxication, but the reader may judge for himself.

A group of a dozen or more assemble, — sometimes in a wigwam, sometimes in the open air. A vessel made of a piece of hide bent into a saucer-shape while green and afterwards hardened, or sometimes an ox-horn, filled with water, is set on the ground. A stone pipe is filled with the scrapings of a wood resembling yellow ebony, mixed with finely-cut tobacco. The company then lay themselves in a circle flat on their faces, their mantles drawn up to the tops of their heads. The pipe is lighted. One takes it into his mouth and inhales as much smoke as he can swallow; the others take it in succession, till all have become satisfied. By the time the second smoker is fully charged, the first begins a series of groanings and gruntings, with a slight trembling of the head, the smoke slowly oozing out at the nostrils. The groaning soon becomes general, and waxes louder, till it swells into a hideous howling, enough to frighten man or beast. The noise gradually dies away. They remain a short time in profound silence, and each imbibes a draught of water. Then succeeds another interval of silence, observed with the most profound and devotional gravity. All at length arise, and slowly disperse. Now, this may or may not have been a form of worship; but the circumstances attending it, the numbers uniformly engaged in it, the formality with which it was invariably conducted

5: Bourne T-5 (1849)1874
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the solemnity of visage, the reverential grimace, the prostration, the silence, the trembling, — these, and traits of expression which are more easily discerned and remembered than described, gave me a decided impression that the whole had a superstitious meaning. The natural operation of the tobacco, and of the substance mixed with it, might explain part of the symptoms,— the writhing and groaning, — but these appeared to be a good deal in excess, and there were other features of the case which appeared to require another solution.

I never asked any explanation. The mystery which savage tribes are so apt to throw around their religious rites, and their resentment at any unhallowed curiosity, I was not inclined to meddle with or provoke. If my conjectures were just as to the nature of this ceremony, inquiry might lead to unpleasant consequences. Ignorance appeared, on the whole, safer than knowledge of good or evil, gained at the risk of being caught trespassing on things forbidden. If any one thinks my precaution excessive, he is at liberty to take a different course whenever he finds himself in the jurisdiction of Parosilver, or any other Patagonian chief.

The inquiry may arise, especially in the mind of the religious reader, whether I attempted to impart to my captors any knowledge of God, his attributes and laws. The answer is quite ready, — No, and for a variety of reasons. The writer did not understand enough of either Spanish or Indian to communicate intelligible ideas on any matters beyond the range of the senses, and Patagonia is pretty barren of sensible phenomena, which made my stock of words more limited than it might have been under more favorable circumstances. There was no finding "tongues

5: Bourne T-5 (1849)1874
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000 in trees," or "books in the running brooks;" the land possesses neither in numbers sufficient to be conversable. "Sermons in stones," even, must have been of very pebbly dimensions, and of no great weight. Had this difficulty been removed, I confess I had no great desire to surmount it. I was the object of suspicion and hostility. My [609] life was in constant danger. To diminish, as far as possible, the causes of dislike, to mitigate their ferocious hate, to elude occasions of mischief, to delay what I feared could not be very long prevented, was my continual study. If the reader is not satisfied with this account of my conduct, I am sorry for it, but cannot afford any words of contrition. It is vastly easier, I may hint to the objector, to prescribe another's duties than to judge of one's own, especially where the two parties are in circumstances so widely differing. The Patagonians need the gospel—and the law—as much as any people I could name from personal observation. There was no trace of instruction imparted at a previous period, and the reception Christianity would meet with among them is yet to be discovered.

276 324 325 Their pipes are made of a hard red stone, the bowl dug out with whatever iron or steel implement is at command to the dimensions of an ordinary clay pipe, the stem about an inch square, and three inches long, with a small perforation. A copper or brass tube, about two inches long, is fitted to the stem, and serves as a mouth-piece. This is made by bending or hammering a metallic plate about a small round stick, and soldering or cementing it with a glutinous substance thickened with earth.

325 The copper, brass and iron, seen among them, was probably procured from unfortunate vessels wrecked on their